

The results in Table 11 show that, contrary to the findings on work satisfaction, employment setting does not have a significant impact on how satisfied staff nurses are with their choice of nursing as a career. This means that the 40% of RN staff nurses employed in hospital settings who agreed that they would encourage others to become a nurse is not really different (in a statistical sense) from the 62% of RNs in long term care settings who said the same. Levels of career satisfaction are essentially the same for RN staff nurses in every setting, as they are for LPNs in every setting.

The findings in Table 11 are actually heartening. They show that the majority of staff nurses in North Carolina, regardless of their employment setting, are satisfied with their career choice, enjoy being a nurse, and would encourage others to become a nurse. That bodes well for the future, since nurses who are satisfied with their career choice are less likely to leave the nursing profession. They may leave a particular job, or move from one setting to another, but they will probably stay in practice. These results suggest that most nurses in North Carolina are not disengaging from their profession as some anecdotal reports have suggested.

Table 11. Career satisfaction levels among RN and LPN staff nurses by setting type

<i>Percent that agree or agree strongly with the statement:</i>	Staff RNs			Staff LPNs		
	Hospital In-Patient	Long Term Care ⁵	Community Setting	Hospital In-Patient	Long Term Care	Community Setting
e. Overall, I am satisfied with my choice of nursing as a career.	57.9	50.0	70.4	70.5	67.4	71.6
	$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.1835$			$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.9486$		
f. I like being a nurse.	73.2	75.0	81.0	77.3	84.4	83.6
	$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.5152$			$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.7185$		
g. I would encourage others to become a nurse.	40.4	62.5	53.2	50.0	62.2	59.0
	$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.1727$			$\chi^2 p\text{-value} = 0.5629$		

Note that the Chi Square tests were run on the full distribution of answers to the satisfaction items. Because of space constraints only the percentage who answered with a value of 4 (agree) or 5 (agree strongly) are included in this table.

On the other hand, there are warning signs that a sizable proportion of staff nurses may be on the verge of burning out. Table 12 reports the percentage of nurses from each setting that disagreed or disagreed strongly with the career satisfaction indicators. The results suggest that, even among those who are still satisfied with their career choice, many of them would not encourage others to become a nurse. This shows, at best, a disappointment in the daily realities of how they are able to practice their profession. At worst, it suggests a fatalism about the fate of the nursing profession in years to come.